NCCS User Survey

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY
MANAGED BY UT-BATTELLE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Survey Overview

- Conducted Nov-Dec 2010
  - This presentation is based on an initial draft of the results

- Hosted by ORISE for the fourth year
  - Web based
  - If necessary, could be handled via email

- Users notified both by ORISE and OLCF

- Initial analysis done by ORISE
  - Where applicable, aggregate numbers reported to OLCF
  - Quotes/freeform responses provided to OLCF not associated with individuals unless they authorized it

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Survey Overview

- As in the past, the survey focused on different aspects of the OLCF

  – User Assistance

  – Website

  – Systems

- Additional focus was placed on user workflow and how we can better support it

- Most questions were selection-based (rate 1-5, yes/no, etc.) but several were free-form.
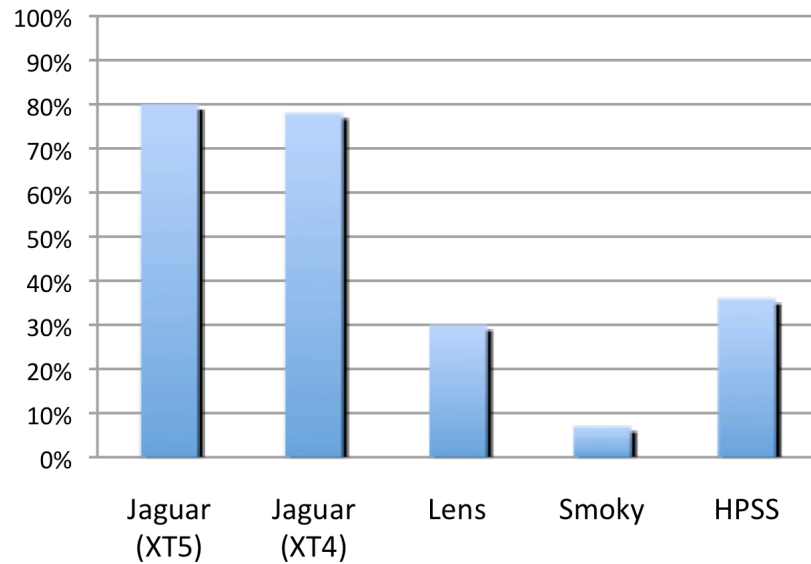
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Survey Highlights

- 402 responses
  - 36% response rate (similar to previous years)
  - Raw number of responses continues to increase

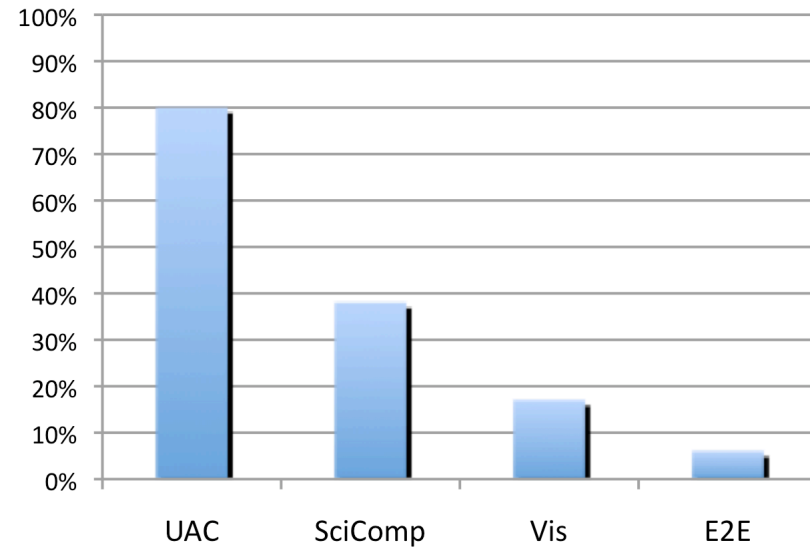|	
2006 (beginning of year)	13
2006 (year-end)	41
2007	181
2008	226
2010 (covering 2009)	250
2010 (covering 2010)	4-2

  - *Thanks for your participation!*

- Good mix of new and returning OLCF users
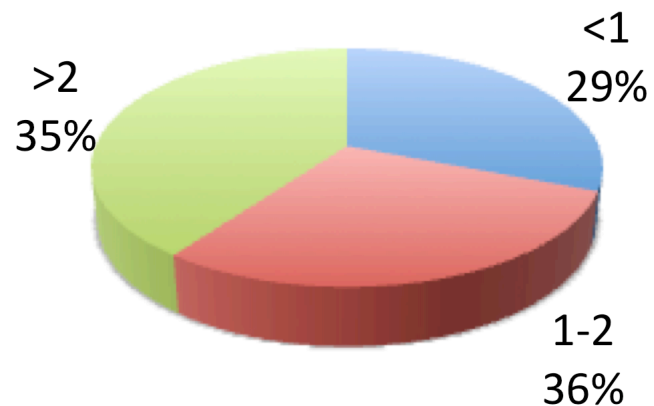
Survey Highlights

- Systems Used
- Services Used

Respondent Demographics

- Years as an OLCF User

- Users by Primary Project Classification

Years as an OLCF User:
- <1 — 29%
- 1-2 — 36%
- >2 — 35%

Users by Primary Project Classification:
- INCITE — 62%
- ALCC — 2%
- DD — 26%
- OTHER — 25%

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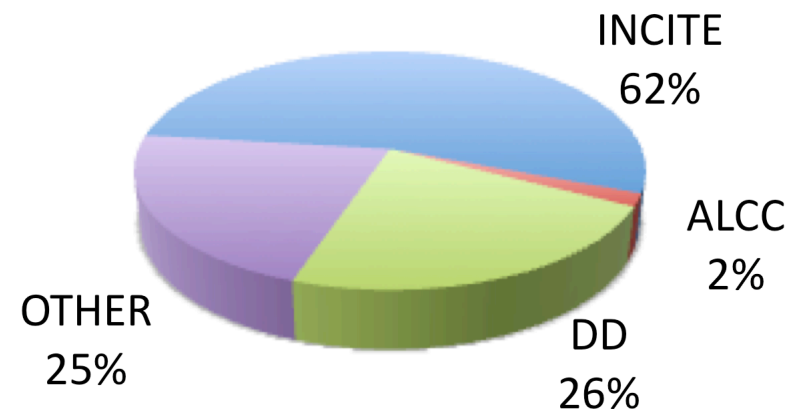
Survey Highlights

- Users on multiple types of projects
  - The majority (near 90%) are not
  - Of those that are, most are INCITE and DD

- Overall Satisfaction
  - 90% either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

User Assistance and Outreach

- Users seem satisfied with level of service provided

- Concern about account creation time

- Various comments about the website
  - Some things difficult to find
  - Suggestions on how to reorganize some content

- Comments about machine status

System-specific Evaluation

- Systems evaluated in areas of scratch disk performance, HPSS interface, batch queue system, and overall performance

- Done for both Cray XT partitions and lens
  - Note that not all users have accounts on all systems

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Cray XT4 and XT5

- In each case, the overall rating for the partition was 3.98/5.0

- Other ratings were similar, in the 3.5-4.2 range

- The lowest rating for each partition was for unscheduled outages
  - XT5 saw a spike in them later in the year
  - Working to address this

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Lens

- Ratings ranged from 3.51-just under 4

- Lowest rating was in overall system performance
  - Interestingly, every "component" rating was higher than the overall rating

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Visualization

- Users rated the both the visualization hardware and support staff

- Ratings were in the 3.8-3.9 range

- Users were asked to rate the availability of visualization tools offered, 57% rated this as 4 or 5

Productivity

- Users were asked if they were interested in workflow tools, I/O optimization, and their desire for an end-to-end dashboard (to display results in real-time)

- In general, users answered "No"
  - Workflow: 19%/81%
  - I/O Optimization: 31%/69%
  - End-to-end: 41%/59%

- The biggest change here is in the number of people that have an interest in the end-to-end dashboard

- *While the majority in each of these areas answered 'No', 'Yes' answers did make up a significant percentage.*

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Training

- Users expressed interest in a variety of training topics
  - Tuning/Optimization
  - GPGPUs
  - Parallel programming models (MPI, hybrid, etc)
  - Debugging

- Watch the OLCF Weekly Update for announcements about on-site and web based offerings
  - Based on replies, users are most interested in improved documentation but are also interested in web-based training (both interactive and archived)

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General Comments

- Frustration with performance of lustre filesystem

- Some frustration with queuing policy

- Users appreciate the size of the systems/ability to run very large jobs

- Concern about unscheduled outages

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Future Actions

- OLCF will review these comments:
  - To identify areas for improving the user experience
  - To identify areas where the existing positive experience needs to be maintained

- We'll also work to better publicize how we've addressed user concerns in the survey

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Staying Informed

- OLCF Weekly Update
  - Typically sent the afternoon of the last business day of the week
  - If you are other members of your project are not receiving it, contact help@nccs.gov

- OLCF Conference Call
  - Held quarterly
  - Announced in the OLCF Weekly Update

- /etc/motd

- Status pages on users.nccs.gov

- Possibly others forthcoming
  - Watch for announcements in the weekly update

Additional Resources

- Website
  - Status page/calendar
  - System FAQs, User Guides, etc.
  - Special request forms
  - Anonymous "suggestion box"

- User Assistance Center
  - help@nccs.gov
  - (865) 241-6536
  - 9-5 M-F, exclusive of ORNL holidays

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Final Words

- The User Survey is a very important tool for gauging user satisfaction and suggested areas for improvement.

- Other feedback through the year is important, too.

- Please don't be shy…we value your feedback. We're here to serve you!

- Thanks again for taking time to complete the survey!